

Parallels in Sacred Texts: A Closer Look at the Miracles of Jesus and Muhammad

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Throughout the world, children and adults alike eagerly await the commencement of December every year. The season of happiness and joy, our Christian neighbours enjoy the spirit of Christmas by singing carols and reminding one another of the birth, teachings, parables, miracles and other stories related to the life of Jesus Christ.

As per the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, the Muslims can invite the Christians to discuss the commonalities that unite both faiths.⁽¹⁾ It is interesting to note, therefore, that not only are some of the Biblical miracles of Jesus referred to in the Qur'an, but miracles similar to those the Qur'an did not mention were later manifest at the hands of Jesus' successor, Muhammad, the final Messenger to mankind.

Jesus' Miracles in the Bible

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

In the New Testament of the Good News Bible, it is written in John:

“As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been born blind. His disciples asked him, ‘Teacher, whose sin caused him to be born blind? Was it his own or his parents’ sin?’

Jesus answered, ‘His blindness had nothing to do with his sins or his parents’ sins. He is blind so that God’s power might be seen at work in him. As long as it is day, we must keep on doing the work of him who sent me; night is coming when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light for the world.’

After he said this, Jesus spat on the ground and made some mud with the spittle; he rubbed the mud on the man’s eyes and said, ‘Go and wash your face in the Pool of Siloam.’ (This name means ‘Sent’.) So the man went, washed his face, and came back seeing.

His neighbours, then, and the people who had seen him begging before this, asked, ‘Isn’t this the man who used to sit and beg?’

Some said, ‘He is the one,’ but others said, ‘No he isn’t; he just looks like him.’

So the man himself said, ‘I am the man.’

‘How is it that you can now see?’ they asked him.

He answered, ‘The man called Jesus made some mud, rubbed it on my eyes, and told me to go to Siloam and wash my face. So I went, and as soon as I washed, I could see.’

‘Where is he?’ they asked.

‘I don’t know’, he answered.”⁽²⁾

Jesus Heals a Leper

Again in the New Testament, another miracle is mentioned in Luke:

⁽¹⁾ See [Al ‘Imran: 3/64].

⁽²⁾ John 9.



“As Jesus made his way to Jerusalem, he went along the border between Samaria and Galilee. He was going into a village when he was met by ten men suffering from a dreaded skin disease. They stood at a distance and shouted, ‘Jesus! Master! Take pity on us!’

Jesus saw them and said to them, ‘Go and let the priests examine you.’

On the way they were made clean. When one of them saw that he was healed, he came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself to the ground at Jesus’ feet and thanked him. The man was a Samaritan. Jesus said, ‘There were ten men who were healed; where are the other nine? Why is this foreigner the only one who came back to give thanks to God?’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Get up and go; your faith has made you well.’”(3)

Jesus Raises the Dead

In the Gospel of Mark, we find:

“While Jesus was saying this, a Jewish official came to him, knelt down before him, and said, ‘My daughter has just died; but come and place your hands on her, and she will live.’ So Jesus got up and followed him, and his disciples went along with him.

A woman who had suffered from severe bleeding for twelve years came up behind Jesus and touched the edge of his cloak. She said to herself, ‘If I only touch his cloak, I will get well.’

Jesus turned round and saw her, and said, ‘Courage, my daughter! Your faith has made you well.’ At that very moment the woman became well.

Then Jesus went into the official’s house. When he saw the musicians for the funeral and the people all stirred up, he said, ‘Get out, everybody! The little girl is not dead – she is only sleeping!’ Then they all laughed at him. But as soon as the people had been put out, Jesus went into the girl’s room and took hold of her hand, and she got up. The news about this spread all over that part of the country.”(4)

Reference in the Qur’an

Christians might be pleasantly surprised to learn that the Holy Qur’an affirms these miracles – albeit, without the details. In *Surat al-Ma’ida*, Allah says:

“Call to mind [the time] when Allah will say, ‘O Jesus, son of Mary, remember My blessing upon you and upon your mother – when I supported you with the Holy Spirit. You spoke to people while you were still in the cradle and when you grew to middle age. I taught you the Book and the Wisdom, the Torah and the Gospel. You created from clay something in the shape of a bird, then you blew on it, and it became a bird by My permission. You cured those born blind and lepers by My permission. You raised the dead by My permission. I kept the children of Israel away from you when you came to them with clear signs, and the disbelievers among them said, ‘This is nothing but clear magic.’””(5)

Other Miracles

(3) Luke 17:11-19.

(4) Matthew 9:18-26.

(5) [Al-Ma’ida: 5/110].



These are some of Jesus' miracles the Qur'an affirms. There are, however, numerous other miracles recorded in the New Testament.

Jesus Curses a Fig Tree

In Michael, we are told:

"On his way back to the city early next morning, Jesus was hungry. He saw a fig tree by the side of the road and went to it, but found nothing on it except leaves. So he said to the tree, 'You will never again bear fruit!' At once the tree dried up.

The disciples saw this and were astounded. 'How did the fig tree dry up so quickly?' they asked.

Jesus answered, 'I assure you that if you believe and do not doubt, you will be able to do what I have done to this fig tree. And not only this, but you will even be able to say to this hill, 'Get up and throw yourself in the sea,' and it will. If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer.'"⁽⁶⁾

The above story is just one of many great miracles performed at the hands of Jesus Christ.

Below are similar examples found in the life of Muhammad. The comparison between these two great personalities is to demonstrate the practices they shared, which can be used as a means to draw religions together on similar parallels. In other words, the following comparison is not to imply a competition, but to further appreciate the prophetic legacy that both Jesus and Muhammad shared.

Tree Cries for Muhammad

Jabir says:

"There was a tree trunk upon which the Prophet used to lean [when delivering a sermon]. Then, when the pulpit was installed for him, we heard the trunk make noises like ten-month pregnant camels, until the Prophet came down [from the pulpit] and placed his hand on it [to console it]."⁽⁷⁾

Jesus Walks on Water

In the Gospel of John, we read:

"When evening came, Jesus' disciples went down to the lake, got a boat, and went back across the lake towards Capernaum. Night came on, and Jesus had not come to them. By then a strong wind was blowing and stirring up the water. The disciples had rowed about five or six kilometres when they saw Jesus walking on the water, coming near the boat, and they were terrified. 'Don't be afraid,' Jesus told them, 'it is I!' Then they willingly took him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached land at the place they were heading for."⁽⁸⁾

⁽⁶⁾ Michael 21:18-22.

⁽⁷⁾ Al-Bukhari (918).

⁽⁸⁾ John 6:16-21.



Water Gushes from Muhammad's Fingers

Jabir says:

“The people were thirsty on the day of Hdaybiya. In front of the Prophet was a small water pot. He performed his ablutions, and the people rushed towards him. ‘What has happened to you?’ he asked. They answered, ‘We have no water with which to perform ablutions and drink except that which is in front of you.’ He placed his hand in the pot, and the water began gushing from between his fingers like fountains. We drank [from it] and performed ablutions.”

Upon being asked, Jabir said, ‘Had there been a hundred thousand of us, [the water] would have sufficed us. [However,] we were fifteen hundred.’⁽⁹⁾

Jesus Feeds a Great Crowd

In Matthew, we find:

“When Jesus heard the news about John, he left there in a boat and went to a lonely place by himself. The people heard about it, so they left their towns and followed him by land. Jesus got out of the boat, and when he saw the large crowd, his heart was filled with pity for them, and he healed those who were ill.

That evening his disciples came to him and said, ‘It is already very late, and this is a lonely place. Send the people away and let them go to the villages to buy food for themselves.’

‘They don’t have to leave,’ answered Jesus. ‘You yourselves give them something to eat!’

‘All we have here are five loaves and two fish,’ they replied.

‘Then bring them here to me,’ Jesus said. He ordered the people to sit on the grass; then he took the five loaves and the two fish, looked up to heaven, and gave thanks to God. He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. Everyone ate and had enough. Then the disciples took up twelve baskets full of what was left over. The number of men who ate was about 5,000, not counting the women and children.”⁽¹⁰⁾

Muhammad Feeds a Large Crowd

Because the following report is quite lengthy, it will not be narrated in full, but summarised.

Around March 627 CE, after having dug the trench, Jabir noticed the extreme hunger of Muhammad. He then requested his wife to prepare a small meal for the Prophet. A small goat was slaughtered, and Jabir’s wife pleaded him to not embarrass her in front of Prophet by inviting too many people and, hence, each only eating a modest portion of food.

Upon invitation, the Prophet further invited everyone present at the trench to partake of food at Jabir’s home, knowing full well the little quantity of food. He told

⁽⁹⁾ Al-Bukhari (3576).

⁽¹⁰⁾ Matthew 15:13-21.



Jabir to tell his wife to not bake the dough or remove the pot of food until he arrives. Upon arrival, he placed his blessed saliva into the dough and meat pot, and asked Allah for blessings. Without removing the pot from the stove, the one small goat and some bread were enough to feed a thousand guests – with a significant amount left over!⁽¹¹⁾

Conclusion

These are just a few miracles where there are striking resemblances between the Prophets of two of the world's greatest religions. Studying the life of Jesus further, as well as the biography (*sira*) of Muhammad, will reveal far more similarities between the teachings and lifestyle of both Prophets.

While rejoicing over the life of Jesus during the Christmas season, I humbly request my Christian neighbours to take advantage of the spirit of Christmas, and undertake a casual study of the life of Muhammad. This will increase love and appreciation between the adherents of both faiths, and hopefully be a means of harmony in our lives.

⁽¹¹⁾ Al-Bukhari (4102) and Muslim (2039).